

Don Quixote de Pal mdale

The Final Saga of the "Tired Old Man"

Chapter 1

“Wake Up Asshole!”

“Whuuut?”

“You ought to check your mail more often - there’s a letter in here from Putnam Press.”

Ron handed the letter to Gary, who got his reading glasses out, then opened it.

“Says here they read my story, and they want me to submit the rest of my stories to them. What’s this?”

Gary unfolded the letter further and a check dropped out. Picking it up, he fumbled around for his reading glasses, then felt them sitting on his forehead where he left them.

“Holy Cow Ronald MacDonald, this check’s for \$250 thousand!”

“Well read the letter stupid!”

“They say this is my first royalty Check, funny I don’t remember sending anyone my stories?”

“I sorta did it for you. With Sharon gone, you needed something to do.”

“Thanks a lot, now I’ve got to keep writing. That means you need to buy me a new keyboard.”

“Forget the keyboard, with this kind of money you can buy a new computer, and anything else you want.”

“I always wanted 1 of those laptop computers so I could work from anywhere. Can you drive me to the store?”

“Why you out of smokes?”

“Yeah, and I need to stop at the bank, then the computer store.”

They drove to the bank, then the store, and finally to the computer store. The two old geezers were met by a barely wet behind the ears teenager with a bad case of acne.

He opened the door and said, “May I help you gentlemen?

“Yeah, I’ve got a quarter-million to spend on a laptop. What do you have?”

The teenager gulped thinking how much the commission would be on this sale.

“Sir, we have this new Pentium IX laptop with 5 gigabytes of RAM, and 100GB of bubble memory.

I'd recommend a docking port setup and a nice 27-inch monitor and our new chording keyboard/mouse setup.”

“Don’t you have any QWERTY keyboards?”

“I’m sure I’ve got 1 in the back - why?”

“At my age, I’m not sure I’ve got enough time to learn a new keyboard. Matter of fact, better get 2 now while you can, I’m kind of hard on keyboards.”

5 minutes later the kid came back carrying 3 keyboards.

“I found these in back. If you purchase the whole system now, I’ll throw these in for free.”

“What’s included in the system?”

“Windows 2025, Word X, MS Works 2025, and a whole package of anti-spyware and anti-virus software.”

“Can I get Linux 2025 instead?”

“I’ll have to sell you a bare system and the software, you’ll have to load it yourself.”

“Gee, thanks - Ever since Bill Gates sold out to Dell, everything’s either pre-packaged and preloaded in China, or Do It Yourself.”

“I know, the teachers are trying to get everyone to learn Chinese so we can have a job when we graduate. Tell you what, you seem like a nice guy, and it’s real slow today. How about I load the software for you no charge?”

“Do I still have to buy the software?”

“Of course, I could lose my job if I installed pirated software.”

“Right kid - I’ll bet 99% of the computers in your back office have pirated software.”

“I wouldn’t know about that sir, anyway, we normally charge \$50 per hour to install software.”

“Ok, so how much do you want for the software?”

“That’ll be \$1500?”

“Still accept Checks?”

“Let me check.”

He came back 2 minutes later after talking with the Sales Manager, a 19-year old girl with a purple Mohawk, 2 nose rings and a pentagram tattooed on her forehead. “Sure, but we need 2 ID’s.”

Gary took out his HSD “Real ID” and his Driver’s license.

The clerk swiped the ID’s through his data port, then scanned the tags for the equipment he wanted to buy.

“That’ll be \$15,956.35 including tax.”

“What do I need the tacks for?”

“Sir, that’s State and Federal Sales Tax, State VAR tax, State Energy Tax, State Luxury Item tax, and a State Import Tax.”

“How much is it without tax?”

“\$1679.34”

Gary took out his checkbook, wrote a check, then subjected himself to the retinal scan and thumb printing process required to accept a check in California, unless you were an illegal alien, then they took your Green Card as ID and hoped the check cleared before you scurried back to Mexico. 5 minutes later, the kid was back with his computer, and helped them out to the car. Gary spent the rest of the day setting up his computer, then logged onto the Internet. He had 20 e-mail messages, 19 of which were Spam, usually someone trying to sell him whole life insurance for 5 times the term rate. The one message that wasn’t Spam was from the Chief Editor of Putnam Press, saying they had retained the services of a Private Nursing Company, and their nurse would be over that afternoon.

Ron was still there, so Gary asked him “What the heck would I want with a private nurse?”

“They probably got hold of your medical records, and want to make sure you live long enough to pay them back that first royalty check.”

5 minutes later, an old Ford Pinto pulled up in the driveway, and a beautiful blonde got out barely wearing a mini-skirt “nurse’s uniform”. She walked up to the front door and knocked, and Ron answered the door.

“Is Gary here - the service sent me!”

“He’s inside, I’ll show you in.”

Samantha bent down to pick up her bags, and Ron almost stroked out then and there. She followed Ron into Gary’s office where he sat chain smoking and drinking coffee while surfing the internet on his T-1 line. Ron said “Gary, you’ve got a Visitor.”

Samantha strutted forward, stuck out her hand and said “Hi, I’m Samantha, the nursing service sent me.”

Gary was too busy staring at her massive cleavage to say anything coherent. Samantha was used to men zoning out on her, so she bent over to pick up her bags, giving Gary an even better view down her blouse. She picked up her bags, and since Ron was the first one to regain his speech, he told Samantha to set her things in the guest room. As soon as she left, Gary and Ron were busy fanning

themselves, and added extra ice cubes to their iced tea.

“Gar-bear, you’ve got it made - just try not to stroke out on me!”

“Ron, you better up your BP meds too!”

“You know who she reminds me of?”

“Yeah, I was just thinking that - a blonde Sophia Loren. Maybe we should buy the DVD version of “Man from La Mancha” and compare them.”

Samantha overheard them talking, and was flattered. She took this job because her agent/ex-boyfriend wasn’t able to get her any acting jobs in Hollywood. She was a lousy actress, but was hoping her two best assets would get her in the door. When she got to her first interview, she found out that all the other women in Hollywood were blonde haired and blue-eyed with 40DD chests as well. She was heartbroken after 20 interviews, and no jobs. She had plenty of offers, but they were for casual sex, and a vague promise of a job. Luckily before she went to Hollywood, she received her Practical Nursing credential, which allowed her to get a job as a practical nurse until Hollywood called. She got her nurse’s costumes from a friend in Wardrobe, who had a bunch of nurse’s uniforms left over from a porno flick. She didn’t care, they were free, and fit - just barely.

The next day, Ron and Gary drove to the Blockbuster Video, and bought their last DVD copy of Man From La Mancha. As soon as they were in the door, they went into the living room, stuck the DVD into the player, and sat in their Lazy boy recliners. Gary played with the remotes, and finally got the stereo and TV on, then pressed play on the DVD player, and adjusted the volume. Instead of watching the rest of the movie, Gary fast forwarded to the first scene with Sophia Loren, who played “Dulcinea.” a prostitute who worked in the local Brothel/Inn. Right at that moment, Samantha came in with a tray full of Iced Tea, and asked Gary if he wanted any. In the process of handing it to him, she bent way over at the waist, and Gary almost got whiplash from turning his neck so fast back and forth between the TV and Samantha’s cleavage. Ron knew what was coming, so he concentrated on the TV so he could dedicate as much time as possible to ogling Samantha. 2 minutes later, she offered Ron some iced tea, and he barely got out a yes. His eyes locked on her chest, and his brain went into neutral. Finally Samantha just put the tea down instead of handing it to him. Ron’s brain was still in overload, and finally Samantha sat down to watch the movie too.

After the movie was over, Gary was inspired to write like never before - he had to burn off that adrenalin rush from the last 2 hours watching Sophia and Samantha. He wrote 2 whole chapters before he was so exhausted he had to take a nap. Later that evening, he received another e-mail from Putnam Publishers telling him they had accepted his other stories that he submitted, and they owed him another \$250 thousand. He replied to have them direct deposit all future royalty payments directly into his account, and gave them the routing and account number. Later that evening Samantha received a phone call from the service, who told her whatever she was doing, to keep it up - the Publisher had just renewed their contract for another 6 months, and increased the payment by 10%. They gave her an immediate raise, and she decided to do the dusting and vacuuming tomorrow in her French Maid’s outfit.

Ron was over first thing the next morning. Ever since Sharon and Linda died, and they moved back home to Palmdale, Ron was over practically every day, spending time with Gary. When Samantha answered the door in her French Maid’s outfit, he was glad that he had taken his BP meds that morn-

ing, and the docs had recently done an angioplasty, or he would have stroked out then and there. When he walked in to Gary's office, the silly grin pasted on Gary's face told Ron that Samantha had already dusted his office.

“How you holding out there Gary?”

“I've written two more chapters already this morning. Samantha looks even better in a French Maid's outfit!”

“I know, when she answered the door, I started having palpitations, and had a serious problem remembering to breathe.”

“So do you think she's a natural Blonde?”

“Bet you \$5 she's really a redhead!”

“You're on!”

“So how are we going to find out without killing ourselves?”

“Don't know, it's your bet!”

Samantha decided to flounce into the room at that very second, and Ron and Gary's eyes bugged out like they were on stalks as she bent over to dust the table again. 5 minutes later, Gary was typing feverishly, and Ron was trying to stick his head into the freezer.

Over the next couple of months, Gary and Ron alternated between hanging out in Gary's office while he wrote and Samantha dusted an already clean table, and watching “Man From La Mancha” while Samantha served tea and cookies, wearing the same French Maid Outfit. Gary got a stiff neck practically every day from quickly shifting his attention from the TV to Samantha, and she gave him a neck massage and a little extra.

“It's a good thing Sharon and Linda are Dead!”

“Yeah, otherwise they'd have killed us!”

“Doesn't this beat chasing Bimbos?”

“If I would have known how much fun a Private Duty Nurse was, I would have got one years ago.”

“Except Sharon was alive, and when she was finished with you, you'd NEED a Private Duty Nurse!”

“You got that right Ronald MacDonald. So you want to watch “Man From La Mancha” again?”

“Haven't you seen it enough already?”

“Heck no, that movie is inspirational, I've written two whole stories already!”

“I think Samantha's the Inspiration.”

“Hey Ron, you remember Dr. J and the other docs that tried to get me to quit smoking? Well - I’ll tell you - I outlived them all! Just goes to show you why they call it “Practicing” Medicine!” And Now I’ve even got my own 30-year old Private Duty Nurse!”

Chapter 2

Over the next couple of years, Gary wrote over a dozen stories, earned a cool million in royalties, and slowly lost touch with reality. Ron wasn't sure if it was age related, or if watching "Man From La Mancha" 10,000 times in 3 years had anything to do with it. Samantha had stopped wearing her nurse's uniform in the house, since Ron and Gary so obviously preferred her French Maid outfit, and she enjoyed the attention. One day Gary was walking around the house humming "The Impossible Dream" to himself when he spotted a brass-colored bedpan next to his bed, placed it on his head, and declared it the "Golden Helmet of Mambrino." Samantha almost said something, then remembered she was getting paid \$30 thousand per year plus room and board to cook, do light housekeeping, and occasionally flash her assets at a couple of horny old geezers, which beat working for a living by a longshot, and kept quiet. Besides Gary never used the bedpan for a bedpan anyway, and usually used it for an ashtray.

Ron came over and Gary was wearing his helmet.

"What the Hell is that Asshole!"

Gary looked around, and said "Where?"

"On your head stupid!"

"It's the Golden Helmet of Mambrino!"

"It's a Bedpan you Moron!"

They argued back and forth for an hour, and Ron finally decided to let Gary wear it if he wanted to, as long as he stayed indoors.

Gary was spending more and more time wearing his bathrobe and slippers instead of getting dressed in the morning. Ron knew Gary's feet were hurting him, and he really didn't need to go out for anything anyway. Ron brought a carton of smokes with him every couple of days, and went grocery shopping for the two of them. Besides being Gary's best friend, the fringe benefits of hanging out with him were the best in the world! They developed a routine, Ron would show up shortly after breakfast while Gary was writing, say "Morning Asshole" then bum one of Gary's smokes and a cup of coffee while they sat and talked about Gary's stories. Samantha would come through every hour or so with fresh coffee, or would stop to dust something, giving both the old codgers an eyeful, and prompt Gary to start writing at a frenetic pace.

In the afternoon when they were tired, the 2 Amigos would sack out on their Lazy boy Recliners, put in "Man from La Mancha" and take a nap. Samantha would wake them up for tea and cookies around 2 or 3 o'clock. Gary would get a stiff neck from the sudden movement of his head, and most of the time he could talk Samantha into one of her patented neck massages. Gary liked her neck massages because at least a couple of times a week, she'd get too close behind him and bump into his back with her "dock bumpers" as Gary called them. Unfortunately at his age and medical condition, the only thing that got stiff when that happened was his neck! Ron was able to appreciate Samantha's attributes too, but lamented the fact that he was too old to do anything about it.

"Gary, you know what the definition of a Crying Shame is?"

“Sure, it’s called Samantha in a French Maid’s Outfit, and we’re in our 80’s! If I were 20 years younger!”

“If you were 20 years younger, Sharon would still be alive, and she’d kill you!”

Gary remembered Sharon, and when she died. They were living in Arizona, and Gary had slipped and fallen down the stairs of his shelter. He woke up in the hospital with a splitting headache staring into a bright light. Not knowing where he was he thought to himself “I must be dead.” He didn’t have his glasses on, and everything was blurry. He looked around and said “Nope, this can’t be Hell, I don’t see Stimpy or Hasher around to torment me.” He looked around some more, and his friend Ron walked up.

“When did you die?”

“You’re not dead, you’re in the hospital.”

“That explains why you’re here, and Stimpy and Hasher aren’t!”

Ron looked at his friend, and wondered if he’d knocked anything loose upstairs in his fall.

“Ronald MacDonald, could you hand me my glasses?”

Ron picked up his glasses from the night stand, and handed them to Gary. As soon as he put them on, his vision cleared, and his headache got better.

When he got a better look at Ron, he saw the grief on his face.

“Ron, what’s happened.”

“Sharon and Linda got in an auto accident on the way back from Phoenix.”

“Well, where are they - I want to go see Sharon!”

“Gar-Bear, they hit a Semi head-on, there were no survivors!”

Gary slumped back into the pillows.

“Oh my God. Ron, you OK?”

“I’m better now that you’re OK. You gave the doc a scare. Evidently that hard head of yours saved your life, and all you got was a concussion. You’ve been unconscious for 24 hours. If you’re up to it, we need to go to the funeral home tomorrow and see to Sharon and Linda’s bodies.”

Ron waved his hands in front of Gary, saying “Earth calling Gary...Come in Gary!”

Gary snapped out of it, and realized Ron was talking to him.

“What’s up, Uglier than Me?”

“Look who’s talking, you’re wearing a bedpan on your head!”

Gary reached up, and felt the bedpan, and took it off. “How’d it get there?”

“You’ve been wearing it the last couple of weeks, You thought it was the “Golden Helmet of Mambrino” from “Man of La Mancha.”

“You sure?”

“Wouldn’t lie to you about something like that!”

“Maybe I better cut back on the coffee.”

Right at that point Samantha came in wearing her French Maid’s outfit carrying 2 hot mugs of coffee and a tray of muffins. As usual, the 2 Amigos were speechless around her, and accepted a mug of coffee and a muffin without saying a word. Gary’s eyeballs hurt after Samantha left, and Ron was grinning like the Cheshire Cat.

Chapter 3

“Morning Asshole!”

“Whuuut?”

With their morning routine accomplished, Ron sat down to catch up with Gary.

“You’ll never guess what happened this morning. Two guys named Stimpy and Hasher showed up. I invited them in for Coffee, and when Samantha came in wearing her French Maid’s outfit, they laughed themselves silly, drank their coffee, and left.”

“Why’d they do that?”

“I don’t know - maybe some sort of Male Bonding Ritual?”

“How’s the story coming along?”

“Samantha’s due any time now with coffee and muffins - she’s usually good for a chapter or two.”

“At this rate, you should have written about 10 books by now.”

“I checked my bank balance yesterday, and I’ve got \$1.5 Million in there.”

“How about a loan partner?”

“You want to buy that new BMG-50 Sniper Rifle, don’t you?”

“Yeah, I saw it on the internet. It comes with a huge scope and a suppressor.”

“Why would anyone put a suppressor on a huge rifle like that?”

“It quiets the gun down considerably, plus it eliminates the muzzle blast, and acts as a better muzzle brake than anything they’ve come up with so far.”

“Ok, what’s it cost - I assume you want the scope and ammo too?”

“Of course - What’s her face down the street said she could order it for me, but it’ll cost \$50 grand.”

“Ok, I’ll write you a check, I can cover that out of pocket change so don’t worry about paying me back!”

Gary got out his checkbook, signed a check and gave it to Ron.

“Here you go - write in the amount and the payee when you get there.”

“You gave me a blank check? After all these years?”

“It’s only money - besides if you wanted to mess with me, you could have done it years ago.”

Ron drove over to the gun shop, laid the check on the counter, and told Sandy he wanted that Barrett BMG-3000 he’d been drooling over, including the scope and 500 rounds of BMG-50 Match ammo for it.

Sandy punched the order into her computer. “Ok, that’ll be \$50, 495.56”

“Take a check?”

“From you or Gary, Ok, you haven’t bounced one to me yet.”

“Yeah, and we’ve bought half your store by now.”

“I’ll sell you the other half cheap.”

“Maybe later.”

“So, do you own 1 gun in every civilian caliber yet?”

“I’ll finish that goal when I get my hands on that Barrett.”

“I’ll make sure to expedite the shipping.”

“How come, you never did that before?”

“I heard about that new “Private Duty Nurse” Gary’s got, and I wanted to make sure you achieved your goal before you died of a heart attack.”

“Great - Everyone’s a Comedian!”

Ron drove back to Gary’s house, got out and walked into his office. Great, he didn’t miss Samantha’s Morning Dusting Routine. Ron took his favorite chair, not that it was any more comfortable than any others in the room, but it provided the best views of Samantha while she dusted. When he sat down, Gary’s eyes had already glazed over and he was starting to drool, so he knew it was going to be a 2 ice pack morning. Ron had discovered it was easier to put an ice pack on his head than to stick his head in the freezer for half an hour. 2 hours later, Gary was typing like mad, and Ron was well into his second ice pack.

Later that afternoon, when Gary had run out of steam, they retired to the “viewing room” where they put in “Man from La Mancha” and took a nap in their Lazy Boys. Right on cue, Samantha came in wearing her French Maid’s outfit. For some reason this time Gary called her Dulciana. Ron thought that was odd, but didn’t say anything. It seemed that Gary’s lapses of sanity were getting more and more frequent. His favorite delusion was that he was Don Quixote, Ron was Sancho, and Samantha was Dulcinea. . It was a harmless delusion, so Ron didn’t say anything, and played along occasionally. Ron didn’t want to upset his friend, and besides, this was better than their “Who’s on First” routine for laughs.

When they woke up, Gary was muttering something about his “Trusty Steed Rocinante” and was shuffling around the house when he passed by the window that overlooked the driveway, and spied Samantha’s ancient Pinto in the driveway.

“Squire, fetch my horse?”

“What horse?”

“Yonder horse thou knave!”

Ron looked where Gary was pointing and saw he was pointing at and started laughing “that’s nothing but a Pinto you idiot!”

“I don’t care if it’s a Pinto or a Palomino, that’s my fleet-footed Rocinante, a horse of courage, sobriety, and chastity; the flower and glory of horseflesh.”

Ron recognized the line from the movie, and played along. “Very well my lord, I’ll feed and brush her.”

“Well done Squire Sancho.”

Samantha walked into the room at that point, as Gary departed, his delusional mission accomplished.

“He called you a Squire, how does a Squire Squire?”

“Well, first, I ride behind him. Then he fights. And then I pick him up off the ground.”

Samantha never paid that much attention to the dialog, and didn’t recognize the quote, so she walked off to do something muttering about “Those senile old farts.”

Chapter 4

Over the next couple of years, Gary's grip on reality slipped further and further from his grasp. Samantha wore her French Maid's outfit full-time now, and Gary called her Dulcinea instead of Samantha. He rarely called Ron by his correct name, and almost always called him Sancho. Ron knew the best thing he could do for his life-long friend was to humor him. Samantha did some research on the internet, and realized there wasn't much medical science could do for Gary either, except stick him in a nursing home where he'd be miserable. At least at home he had Ron and her to keep him company, and he got to eat his favorite foods and smoke as much as he wanted. During his lucid intervals, he continued to write, mostly stories about the 3 Amigos that she thought were hysterically funny. She took turns with Ron editing and reviewing his work, which was pretty good for a 3/4 senile 80 year-old geezer.

Finally Ron had seen "Man From La Mancha" for the last time, and flipped the channel while Gary was snoozing. Unfortunately when he woke up, the Discovery Channel was playing a special about the Wind Turbines in Cajon Pass. Gary took 1 look at them and said "Dost not see? A monstrous giant of infamous repute whom I intend to encounter."

"You Imbecile, those are Windmills!"

"A giant. Canst thou not see the four great arms whirling at his back? Sancho fetch me my horse and lance."

"Yes Lord."

Gary got up, grabbed his bedpan "Helmet of Mambrino" and headed for the door. Samantha grabbed Gary's wheelchair, assuming he wanted to go shopping, which he did infrequently. Ron met them next to the door with a 6-foot long piece of 1" conduit that Gary had decided was his lance. Ron opened the front door of Samantha's Pinto, and Gary said "Thank you Squire." Samantha climbed in front, and Ron got in back with Gary's lance. Gary yelled to Samantha "Take me to the Giants!"

She turned around for instructions from Ronald who said "Head for Cajon Pass, that's where they're at."

Samantha shrugged, started the car, and put in her "Man from La Mancha" CD and turned on to CA-138E. 45 miles later, they got near I-15, and Gary spotted the windmills and got excited yelling "I told you there were Giants here." Samantha followed his directions, drove up the overlook near the huge windmill farm. The huge windmills towered hundreds of feet in the air, and covered acres of land surrounded by a high-security fence to keep people out. Samantha parked the car at the overlook, and got the wheelchair out for Gary, who insisted on wearing his helmet and carrying his lance. Ron walked behind him like a good Squire and pushed. When they got to the edge, Gary was overcome by the urge to attack the Giants he saw in his mind, grabbed the wheels of his chair, and with a might shove, broke free from Ron's grip. It was all downhill to the fence, and Gary quickly built up speed. Ron yelled after him "They're not Giants- They're Windmills."

By now Gary was beyond earshot and beyond caring. He yelled "Charge" and lowered his lance to attack the giants. Right then the wheelchair bounced, the point of his lance stuck in a gopher hole and catapulted him high in the air over the security fence. On the way down, the huge turbine blade caught the back of his shirt and hauled him upward at a tremendous speed. At the top of it's arc, he

flew higher into the air, and as he was descending from 5,000 feet or so, he said “Look, I can see my house from here.”

Thankfully Gary passed out from Hypoxia before he hit the ground.

Two weeks later – Ron and Samantha met at the Lawyer’s Office for the reading of the will. (Skipping the boring details)

I hereby bequeath my entire firearms collection to Ron Green.

I hereby bequeath \$500,000 dollars in a trust fund for the care of Damon to be managed by my lawyer.

I hereby bequeath all residual royalties from my writings to Derek and Amy equally, or to their estates.

I hereby bequeath the sum of \$100,000 to Samantha, my faithful Private Nurse. Thanks for the Memories, and the view!

Samantha jumped up and down excitedly “Gary gave me \$100,000 dollars!” then she remembered she was still wearing her skimpy nurses uniform, and looking down, realized what Gary meant by “Thanks for the View”!

“Well if I’d have known he enjoyed it so much, I would have taken off the uniform for him!”

The attorney spoke up “Yeah, and give the old codger a heart attack! Not a good idea!”

Later, when they finished, Ron offered to give Samantha a ride back to Gary’s place to pick up her things. When they got inside Gary’s house, Samantha noticed Ron was looking at her appreciatively. Without thinking, she started unzipping her uniform. Ron was starting to perspire heavily, and when she stepped out of it stark naked, Ron’s last thought was “Gary was right, she really was a Redhead!” and keeled over deader than a doornail.

Samantha looked down at Ron’s body, which had an ear-to-ear smile plastered on his face, and said “Oh Pooh! That always happens!”

**** Later ****

Gary and Ron were sitting on a Cloud, and Ron said “Pay up Asshole!”

“What for?”

“You bet me \$5 she wasn’t a real blonde.”

“How would you know?”

“How do you think I got here!”

“Right, well I don’t have any money on me.”

“That’s OK, I’ll wait!”

“It might be a while.”

“I wonder what an eternity’s worth of interest is on \$5?”

The End